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IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN UKRAINE

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ABSTRACT:

The pandemic has put the higher education of Ukraine to new challenges. The **objectives** of the article are to describe implementation of distance learning in Ukraine, illustrate the personal learning systems and their levels, provide practical examples of content of personal learning systems.

Theoretical and methodological base of the research of distance learning consists of activity approach that is grounded on the psychological theory of activity and the concept of personally oriented learning, directed at formation and development of students' subjectivity, with due regard to their individual abilities.

Results are the following. Studying during the lockdown has essentially speeded the implementation of various forms and technologies of distance education, actualised the tasks to modernise its organisation, search for efficient methods of managing the process of studying, has provoked the necessity for teachers to improve their level of mastering information and communication technologies.

The concept of development of distance education in Ukraine has emphasised that it creates conditions for realisation of the system of continuous "life-long learning" and provides individualisation of studying by mass education. Meanwhile this organisation should be built as a pedagogical system that consists of the elements (goals, principles, content, methods and forms of the educational activity) and is realised by information and communication technologies. In S. Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics distance learning is supported by PNS

(personal learning systems) that consist of content, interactive and autonomous levels. The content of the given levels is characterised and supported by practical examples.

Conclusion: implementation of distance learning in such a form enables renewal of content, forms and methods of studies according to current demands of the society in innovative development; individualisation of the educational process with due regard to demands of those who study as well as optimisation of the whole educational process.

KEY WORDS:

Distance Learning, Higher Education, Life-Long Learning, Methods of Studying.

INTRODUCTION

The quarantine period has introduced significant changes into students' studying and teachers' work. The situation of the pandemic COVID-19 has appeared to be a challenge because of a sudden and forced transition to "WORK FROM HOME" regime that has provoked re-organising and re-structuring the educational process. Thus, both teachers and students of local as well as foreign educational institutions have faced the necessity to adapt to new forms of studying and teaching, moreover in very short terms. The lack of social activity has implied additional psychological burden and stress for students. They have to work longer hours on their own; lectures, practical classes and consultations have been changed by webinars, on-line conferences etc.

So, the pandemic has put the higher education of Ukraine to new challenges. Studying during the quarantine has essentially speeded the implementation of various forms and technologies of distance education, has actualised the tasks to modernise its organisation, search for efficient methods of managing the process of studying, has provoked the necessity for teachers to improve their level of mastering information and communication technologies.

The purpose of the article is to describe implementation of distance learning in Ukraine, illustrate the studying base and its

levels, provide practical examples of certain culture-specific information.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the concept of development of distance education in Ukraine it is emphasised that distance learning creates conditions for realisation of the system of continuous "life-long learning" and provides individualisation of studying by mass education.

Information and communication technologies should not be perceived as the ultimate goal but rather as solution on the way to reduce barriers and increase communication (Bozkurt, 2014). Among the advantages of computer technologies applied in the classroom are: self-paced instructions; text, graphics, audio and video materials; high levels of interactivity; written records of discussions and instructions; inexpensiveness and world-wide access; increase in diversity of students; greater collaboration (Jonassen, 2011; Moore, 2003; Traxler, 2018). Thus, distance learning opens new possibilities and ways for training the youth. They concern enlargement of access to all levels of education, realisation of possibilities of its obtaining for a large amount of young people, including those who cannot study at higher educational institutions by traditional forms due to lack of financial or physical abilities, professional engagement, remoteness from big cities, prestigious educational institutions etc,

provided by cloud computing, in particular (Holubnycha L., Kostikova I., Kravchenko H., Simonok V., Serheieva H., 2019). Moreover, such a form of education requires renewal of the content of studies and methods of teaching subjects and enlarging knowledge (Concept of Development of Distance Education in Ukraine, 2000).

Distance learning presupposes a new organisation of the educational process where teachers and students interact remotely. Meanwhile, this organisation should be built as a pedagogical system that consists of the elements (goals, principles, content, methods and forms of the educational activity) and is realised by information and communication technologies.

Distance educational resources enable direct communication of students with a teacher (online), continuous quality control of mastered knowledge, realisation of the individual approach in studies, adaptation of the educational material to a personal learning rate of each student. Studies can take place at any comfortable time that gives the possibility to combine it with work, doing tasks by individual schedule and timetable, which is the most convenient for all participants of the educational process.

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical and methodological base of distance learning consists of activity approach that is grounded on the psychological theory of activity (L. Vygotskyi, O. Leontiev, S. Rubinstein and others) and the concept of personally oriented learning (Y. Bondarevska, I. Bekh, I. Ziaziun, I. Yakimanska and others), focused on formation and development of students' subjectivity, with due regard to their individual abilities.

Scientists have proved that quality increase in individual educational activity influences directly the professional self-development of a future specialist. Intensification of its role in modern conditions assumes re-considering of approaches to its organisation and

management, generating new forms of communication between a teacher and students. They have to provide psychological and pedagogical conditions in order to form scholastic skills, the flair for self-education, skills to apply knowledge in a creative way in the process of self-realisation in the professional activity and permanent adaptation to changing conditions of the modern world.

Self-organisation always implies active position of a personality as a subject of their activity. To I. Zymniaia's point of view, an individual work of a student who is a subject of the educational activity means aim-directed, inwardly motivated, structured by a subject activity, that consists of acts of its implementation and correction concerning the process and result. In the scientist's opinion, unsupervised work demands from those who study a high level of self-consciousness, reflexiveness, self-discipline, responsibility; it has to bring pleasure for a student from the process of self-perfection and self-actualisation. So, in such a determination, the most crucial are psychological determinants of individual work: self-regulation, self-actualisation, self-organisation, self-control etc. I. Zymniaia considers the individual work to be a specific type of the educational activity, the highest form of self-education (Zymniaia, 2003).

In that respect the case is about the urgency of acquiring by students a self-educational competence that according to S. Bodnar's research is a qualitative characteristic of a personality. It provides for understanding the necessity of professional and personal self-development, formation of the ability for individual organisation of cognitive and research activity aiming at improvement of professional knowledge and acquisition of skills and habits concerning practical application in the sphere of professional activity. Self-educational competence creates grounds for flexible reaction to social and economic transformations in the society and increase

in a personal level of competitive ability at Ukrainian and foreign labour markets (Bodnar, 2014).

The scientists' works (Bykov, Kukharenko, Syrotenko, 2008; Stephanenko, 2008) deal with the basic principles of the system of distance learning: flexibility, modularity, responsiveness, adaptability, consistency, creativity and transparency. It is based on mostly individual obtaining of the necessary amount and quality of knowledge, and presupposes combination of a wide range of traditional and innovative information technologies. The use of these technologies allows students to form skills and habits which will further determine a person's success in any sphere of his activity. Among them, there are:

- skills to plan activity on one's own;
- skills to take decisions, make a choice and be responsible for it;
- skills to work in information space (select the necessary information, structure and apply it to make decisions in a certain situation);
- skills to present the results of activity using the information technologies;
- habits of self-education.

RESULTS

Due to implementation of quarantine, the period of distance learning has set in the whole world. S. Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics, Ukraine (S. Kuznets KhNUE) has not been an exception either. Its distance learning is supported by PNS (personal learning systems) placed on the platform MOODLE. PNS was created in 2009 with the aim to monitor and coordinate students' work, provide qualitative content of the educational environment, equal access of participants of the educational environment to qualitative educational and methodical materials (notwithstanding their place of living and form of studying), creating conditions for personalisation of studying. Its resources presuppose blended learning (both on-line and off-line).

PNS consists of three levels: content, interactive, autonomous.

The content level is characterised by filling the course with the educational materials, available for a mixed form of studying, structuring the educational material etc.

Let us consider the course "Professional Foreign Language". As cross-cultural competence creates the basis for mutual understanding being a part of our daily lives, the course is considered through the perspective of cross-cultural communication (Kolbina, Oleksenko, Tsyypina, Yevdokimova-Lysohor, 2019).

The aim of the course is to form students' ability to communicate efficiently both in written and oral forms, skills to apply a foreign language in various types of professional activity within the topics stipulated by professional requirements, in particular the ability to extract the necessary information from a foreign source.

In this type of PNS level students and teachers are divided by space and time, that allows them concentrate on the content form of a written text.

Thus students can use content pages and reference books to organise study resources effectively and develop their individual study plans.

At this level students get aware of the fact that though professional communication between representatives of different cultures is realised by general "laws", it has its own peculiarities. Foremost students learn that each national culture accumulates its own ways of activity, attitudes between people embodied in certain habits, traditions, rituals, behaviour and communication. Thus to find their bearing in a multicultural world students familiarise themselves with a system of categories which reflect a person's attitude to the surrounding world, manifestations of time (past – present –future, synchronism – sequence of acts), way of living (active – passive), space (private – official sphere), attitudes (competition – cooperation), etc.

For example time perception differs from culture to culture.

In monochromic cultures (countries of Western Europe, the USA, Canada etc) time is considered to be a limited resource (it goes fast, ends soon and is considered to be irreversible). So the time is valued highly that results in people's accuracy, their habits to plan all types of activity, focus on the result and efficient work, following agreements and terms. Representatives of the monochromic cultures demand the same from their partners.

In polychronic cultures (countries of Latin America, Middle East, the majority of post-Soviet republics etc) time is referred to as an unlimited resource that can be used as one pleases. It leads to people's doing several acts simultaneously, not always finishing the things which are planned, refocusing the activity, being late, changing the dates of meetings, being irresponsible, etc. Representatives of such cultures value personal relations higher than the set plan of actions.

The interactive level of personal learning systems presupposes adding interactive elements of communication, such as semi-automatic assessment of the completed tasks, testing online, in-coming and out-coming questionnaires, efficient application of communication tools, current control of students' performance.

This PNS level plays a significant role in studying professional foreign language, as formation of skills of professional communication in a written form is mostly wide-spread, such as business correspondence and documentation. At this level students perceive that written texts unlike oral ones are more substantive in juridical terms. They are distinguished by consistency and accuracy of utterances. In the process of composing written messages students have time to think over sentences, sort out the appropriate words, grammar constructions etc.

At the interactive level students are proposed to analyse certain cultural

blunders illustrating how crucial cultural awareness is in international business today. The examples of cultural blunders are as follows:

1. The agreement between a Spanish and Mexican firm concerning the sales of a huge amount of corks for champagne to the latter, failed. The Spanish firm dyed them wine-colour.

2. Soviet traders could not sell the car 'Zhiguli' abroad.

3. A golf-ball manufacturing company packaged golf balls in packs of four for convenient transportation to Japan. The deal failed.

4. A US telephone company tried to market its products and services to Latinos by showing a commercial in which a Latino wife tells her husband to call a friend and say they would be late for dinner. The commercial failed.

5. Polish trade mark 'Uroda' which specialises on the women's clothes failed in Russian-speaking countries.

6. In Latin America advertising of cigarettes "Marlboro" was extremely unsuccessful.

7. General Motors had a perplexing problem when they introduced the Chevy Nova in South America. Despite their best efforts, they weren't selling many cars.

Keeping in mind cross-cultural dimensions students choose the answers which fit best to the following:

1. During a negotiation process in Italy two members of the Italian team are constantly answering telephone calls. Why does it happen?

a) It means that they do not take much interest in your proposal.

b) To make foreigners feel discomfort and reveal their 'weak sides' is a well-known tactics.

c) They may be answering the phone calls of their top managers, not to do which would be impolite.

2. Western partners ask a young Japanese manager the questions that are

within the range of his competence. He answers them but looks downwards. He...

a) hides something and chooses the answer to defend himself.

b) shows his respect to the guests.

c) takes no interest in the conversation and wants to stop it as soon as possible.

3. What statements given below describe high context communication?

a) The most important part of information is explicitly expressed.

b) Interlocutor possesses the most of information and it is not necessary to inform him / her.

c) Little information is presented in a decoded main part of the message.

d) a and b.

e) b and c.

4. Which of the following statements describe a typical behaviour in low context cultures?

a) There are wide information channels between family members, friends and colleagues.

b) There is a line between private life, social relations and other day-to-day aspects.

c) Every time people get into cooperation with others, they need detailed introductory information.

d) In day-to-day communication no detailed introductory information is needed.

5. What statements may describe a representative of monochronic cultures?

a) They are low context and need information.

b) They are used to short-term relations.

c) The speed of their actions depend on the relationship.

d) They can easily switch to another activity.

e) They can handle many different activities at a time.

6. What statements may describe a collectivist society?

a) A person identifies him / herself as a member of a community.

b) A person identifies him / herself with the personal qualities and achievements.

c) People value their personal well-being higher than the well-being of the group.

d) Group well-being is above everything.

7. What statement out of the given below may describe neutral cultures?

a) To reveal one's emotions openly is natural.

b) Emotions must be restrained.

c) To show anger, anxiety or any other strong emotion at work is not professional.

d) If a partner doesn't show emotions he hides his real feelings behind 'the mask of deceit'.

e) Emotions distort objectivity.

By working with the interactive level it is of a paramount importance for students to understand the assessment requirements and marking criteria in order to manage time efficiently, prepare for tests effectively and self-assess appropriately. The following types of assessment can be used within the interactive level: formative (is done during the course and provides the immediate evidence of students' results) and summative (is done at the beginning and end of the course in order to ensure that students have met the course goals and objectives). The summative assessment is divided into assessment on entry and end-of-course assessment.

The autonomous level presumes the interactive level added by the elements that provide not only mixed education but full on-line learning, such as tasks with self and inter-assessment, audio and video materials, working with glossary etc.

The peculiarity of this level of PNS lies in the fact, that communication is realised in conditions of personal contacts of partners of the educational process. Among the advantages of this form are a fast exchange of information, reliable feed-back due to a direct contact which enables regulating and correcting the process of communication

(asking questions, specifying messages, expressing agreement or disagreement, etc). The difficulties of using the autonomous level are connected with the necessity to find exact adequate words immediately by formulating a message, a probability to miss some important details, forget a part of the received information or misunderstand the essence of the message in the process of its perception.

Students make presentations or give talks on study-related topics; describe charts and diagrams; compare and contrast tables; summarise or paraphrase ideas from articles, research projects; record and present research findings; proof-read and revise their works. Among the criteria are: considering audience and purpose, ordering ideas logically, using appropriate presentation strategies and conventions, sticking to point, considering different points of view, expanding and developing ideas, summarising etc.

They are proposed to make talks on the following:

1. What kind of cultural problems can arise when a company starts working internationally?
2. What does cultural 'divide mean'?
3. In what way do you think working internationally has changed in recent years?
4. How do Asian working styles contrast with Western ways of working?
5. What are the pros and cons of life-time employment and promotion by seniority?
6. How do managerial approaches differ? What do they depend on?
7. What personal skills and qualities are important when you want to work successfully with business partners from other cultures?

In their talks students make a conclusion that being aware of the peculiarities of time perception by representatives of other cultures, taking them into account in the process of international collaboration as well as the ability to change a personal time pace

adapting it to the time pace of a business partner. It is more important precondition of a successful interaction in the process of cross-cultural professional interaction. Besides, future specialists are to get to know the characteristic features of the national manifestation of personal freedom and a person's identity in a professional activity as well as attitude towards authority, competition etc.

So, among the advantages of the concerned personal educational systems are: self-organisation and the ability of self-learning, flexible studying hours, filling gaps as for writing techniques as teachers have the possibility to provide a qualitative feedback in comments to students' works. It provides the possibility to exchange personal experience and practical materials.

DISCUSSION

The study has been grounded on the communication and activity approach which is realised through a set of interconnected acts, which are conscious, aim-directed and motivated in character (Atanov, 2007; Rubinshtein, 2004, et al.); and personality-oriented approach providing a subject's activity and autonomy as for students' own educational activity (Bekh, 2003; Yakimanska, 2000, et al.).

The research has proved that the stages of the pedagogical technology studied in (Kolbina T. V., Oleksenko O. O., 2019) are invariable, and can be applied efficiently in distance learning as well. Three PNS levels help students to gain knowledge and competences on the basis of efficient comprehensive usage of educational innovative information technologies. Thus the efficiency of managing the pedagogical process is improved significantly.

Moreover the studied levels facilitate students' transition from management of their educational activity by teachers (the content level) through co-management (the interactive level) to self-management (the autonomous level).

CONCLUSIONS

The efficiency of using distance technologies in education depends significantly on the level of teachers' preparation for realisation of distance learning, scientific and methodological support together with maintenance, as well as on students' readiness to study under conditions of distance learning.

In order to guide students in values of different cultures it is expedient to implement certain culture-specific information into the course "Professional Foreign Language". The content, interactive

and autonomous levels of KhNUE PNS provide implementation of innovative technologies of studies and modern methods of organisation of the educational process in higher educational institutions. It enables renewal of content, forms and methods of studies according to current demands of the society in innovative development; individualisation of the educational process with due regard to demands of those who study as well as optimisation of the whole educational process.

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УПРОВАДЖЕННЯ ДИСТАНЦІЙНОГО НАВЧАННЯ В УКРАЇНІ

АНОТАЦІЯ / ABSTRACT (in Ukrainian):

Пандемія поставила вищу освіту України перед новими викликами. Мета статті – описати досвід упровадження дистанційного навчання в Україні, проілюструвати персональні навчальні системи (ПНС) та їхні рівні, надати практичні приклади наповнення рівнів ПНС. Теоретико-методологічну основу дослідження щодо дистанційної освіти складає діяльнісний підхід, що ґрунтується на психологічній теорії діяльності і концепції особистісно орієнтованого навчання, що спрямована на становлення і розвиток суб'єктності студентів з урахуванням їхніх індивідуальних властивостей. Результати дослідження: навчання під час карантину суттєво пришвидшило впровадження різних форм і технологій дистанційної освіти, актуалізувало завдання модернізації щодо його організації, пошук ефективних методів управління процесом навчання, змусило викладачів невідкладно підвищувати свій рівень володіння інформаційно-комунікаційними технологіями. У Концепції розвитку дистанційної освіти в Україні наголошено, що дистанційна освіта створює умови для реалізації системи безперервної освіти “через все життя” і забезпечує індивідуалізацію навчання в умовах масовості освіти. У той же час організація має будуватися на педагогічній системі, яка складається з елементів (цілі, принципи, зміст, методи і форми освітньої діяльності) і реалізується через інформаційно-комунікаційні технології. У ХНЕУ ім. С. Кузнеця дистанційне навчання підтримується персональними навчальними системами, які складаються з контентного, інтерактивного і автономного рівнів. Схарактеризовано зміст указаних рівнів і надано практичні приклади щодо їх наповнення. Висновки: упровадження дистанційного навчання у такий спосіб дозволяє здійснити оновлення змісту, форм і методів навчання відповідно до сучасних потреб суспільства в інноваційному розвитку; індивідуалізувати й оптимізувати процес навчання з урахуванням потреб здобувачів вищої освіти.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА:

вища освіта, дистанційне навчання, методи навчання, освіта «через все життя», персональні навчальні системи.

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